

13 plene 72

CHILDREN  
up to  
SCHOOL AGE  
and  
BEYOND

BY  
E. KITCHING  
*(Director, Parents' Union School.)*

LONDON  
PARENTS' NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL UNION  
26 VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1.

Price Sixpence.

13p2emc72

CHILDREN  
up to  
SCHOOL AGE  
and  
BEYOND

BY

E. KITCHING

*(Director, Parents' Union School.)*

LONDON

PARENTS' NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL UNION  
26 VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1.

Price Sixpence.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE.
I. Some General Considerations .....	3
II. A Quiet Growing Time and Playrooms .....	10
III. Breadth and Balance in Education in the Parents' Union School .....	15
IV. A Definite Chart and Compass: Principles and Means to and End .....	26

*The Nursery and Playroom Leaflet is issued free to members, from the P.N.E.U. office.*

## Children up to School Age and Beyond.

By E. KITCHING

### I.

*Education must be a 'continual going forth of the mind,' a continual progress towards that vision of the end which is enlarged in proportion as further sustenance is gathered for the mind. 'Educāre' = to feed, to nourish.*

Happy is the child whose parents have thought upon this counsel before his arrival, for in these exacting days when so much falls upon the mother's shoulders there is little time for reading and not much for thought, and the mother must be furnished *cap-à-pied* with emergency remedies in thought and in deed to meet the constant and sudden raids that will be made upon her love, her knowledge, her forbearance, her sense of humour, and her patience. The reward is great for the mother who willingly gives herself up to the most important work in the world—the care and nurture of her children; and again happy is the child whose father takes a due share in this work.

It is a far cry from Tom or Mary, not yet one year old, to Tom and Mary at seventeen and eighteen, and yet never was there a time when it was more necessary for parents to get a far-reaching vision of education, above and beyond schooling, not only in its various aspects but as a whole. How far new theories of education are wise, how far the increase of scientific knowledge should alter or modify our practices, is not a question to be decided easily. Scientific thought comes and goes, and though the teaching of Science is a message of God to this age, the 'results' are often a matter for further experiment before they can be applied. In the meantime parents who do not follow a carefully thought out method of education, find it difficult to fulfil the claims their children have and make upon them.



'Method implies two things—a way to an end, and step-by-step progress in that way. Further, the following of a method implies an idea, a mental image, of the end or object to be arrived at. What do you propose that education shall effect in and for your child? Again, method is natural, easy, yielding, unobtrusive, simple as the ways of Nature herself, yet watchful, careful, all-pervading, all-compelling. Method, with the *end* of education in view, presses the most unlikely matters into service to bring about that end; but with no more tiresome mechanism than the sun employs when it makes the winds to blow and the waters to flow only by shining. The parent who *sees his way*—that is, the exact force of method—to educate his child, will make use of every circumstance of the child's life almost without intention on his own part.'<sup>1</sup>

'The educational error of our day is that we believe too much in mediators. Now, Nature is her own mediator, undertakes herself to find work for eyes, ears, taste, and touch; she will prick the brain with problems and the heart with feelings; and the part of the mother or teacher in the early years (indeed all through life) is to sow opportunities and then to keep in the background, ready with a guiding or restraining hand only when these are badly wanted. Mothers shirk this work and put it, as they would say, into better hands than their own because they do not recognise that wise letting alone is the chief thing asked of them, seeing that every mother has in Nature an all-sufficient handmaid, who arranges for due work and due rest of mind, muscles and senses.'<sup>2</sup>

'It is well he (a child) should be let grow and helped to grow according to his nature; and so long as the parents do not step in to spoil him, much good and no very evident harm comes of letting him alone. But this philosophy of "let him be," while it covers a part, does not cover the serious part of the parents' calling; does not touch the strenuous incessant efforts upon lines of law which go to the producing of a human being at his best.'<sup>3</sup>

'Weigh his estate and thine: accustom'd, he,  
To all sweet courtly usage that obtains  
Where dwells the King. How, with thy utmost pains.  
Canst thou produce what shall full worthy be?

One "greatest in the kingdom" is with thee,  
Who all-unhindered sees the Father's face,  
And thence replenished glows with constant grace:  
Take fearful heed lest he despised be!

<sup>1</sup> *Home Education*, by C. M. Mason (P.N.E.U. Office, 5/6), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Home Education*, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> *Home Education*, p. 5.

Order thy goings softly, as before  
A Prince: nor let thee out unmannerly  
In thy rude moods and irritable: more,  
Beware lest round him wind of words rave free:

Refrain thee; see thy speech be sweet and rare;  
Thy ways, considered, and thine aspect, fair.'

C. M. Mason.

Miss Mason believed that, in the words of F. D. Maurice, 'the family is the unit of the nation.' Parents will together look before and after, and will each secure and contribute their own quota, if education is to be allowed to bring Tom and Mary to be their best, physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually, providing for their needs in the great relationships of life, to Man, to Nature and to God.

The home is the right and the best place for children—a place where the parents can share the quiet growing time and give them their first delightful intimacies with things and books, a place where (when the difference between autocracy and authority is recognised) the spirit of disciplined freedom makes the general atmosphere natural. In these busy days, it is not easy for parents to secure the sense of leisure with the serenity and faith which are necessary to wise government, but it is in the home that children may most easily be taught to face the discipline of life. Parents who know something beforehand of the child's estate, his powers and his hindrances, will not be unduly uplifted when they see his wonderful sweetness and reasonableness, nor unduly alarmed when he gives way to temper, to deceit, to vindictiveness, to domineering ways, or when, after an illness, good habits fostered with much patience, seem to have taken wings. Upon the parents' attitude to these tendencies, both good and bad, and to such as these, will depend the growth in grace in the years to come of Tom and of Mary.

Even before Tom and Mary are there to assert themselves, most parents know that much may be done in the way of preparation for them. But method, a way to an end, must always be borne in mind, the step-by-step progress, with a guiding principle to light the way. A system of observing certain rules to achieve certain results may succeed with a machine or at the gambling table, but even a machine may fail for weariness, and chance may wreck the rules evolved by the player. Method waits upon the growth of a living being, with an end in view, and upon principles



i3p7cmc72

which not only light the way but are adaptable to the circumstances of the moment: a principle is in touch with life and can pervade it.

For knowledge of the child's estate, parents are asked to turn to the pages of *Home Education*. 'Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven' is the one profound description we have of the child's estate, and in *Home Education* Miss Mason shows how we are greatly helped in considering what we may do to educate children by knowing first what we are forbidden to do—'offend'—'despise'—'hinder.' She then goes on to consider the formation of habits in detail, as one of the assets we are allowed to give children. There are some chapters on early lessons (from six to nine), and the final section deals with the Will, the Conscience, and the Divine Life in the child from his earliest years.

Miss Mason had great faith in parents and believed that their individuality was a great possession for their children; she therefore hesitated to put forward directions and practical suggestions which might interfere with the true relations of parent and child.

'But,' she says, 'our greatness as a nation depends upon how far parents take liberal and enlightened views of their high office. Mother love is not enough to secure for children that continual progress which is necessary if character is to be achieved.' So in *Parents and Children*<sup>4</sup> Miss Mason examines some of the principles which underlie the office of parents. The limitations and scope of authority are considered, also the provision of ideas upon which the children's minds will grow.

A child of nearly two will pull your hand with confidence in a strange place and say 'look! look!' as he explores the ins and outs of his new home with its outbuildings, and this is his attitude to all that he meets in the world around him, both as regards persons and things. And his parents should be ready to go with him and let him look and satisfy his natural curiosity in the natural questions that follow. It is not always an easy task, for children must not be 'hustled' with information. Wise parents know when and where to fortify their children with just so much knowledge as they are likely to need for the present, realising that experience and knowledge must come gradually.

But a wide view of the whence and whither of education must be taken so that ideas may have time to grow and distinctive qualities opportunity to flourish; there must be time too for the training of the sensations and feelings; and for the considered correction of defects of character. Parents need time to ponder

<sup>4</sup> *Parents and Children* (P.N.E.U. Office, 3/6).

i3p8cmc72

upon the teaching of morals, upon the work of faith and duty, and above all upon the things of the Spirit, for they stand as revealers of God to their children.

Even children untaught in religious matters will ask questions about God, and many children will express very candid opinions, moralise, criticise their elders, say 'Why shouldn't I?'; they will feel interested in, and superior to, that 'naughty little boy'; and they will show extraordinary powers, for example, of sympathy, pity, goodwill, a sense of justice. But in all these matters they need the helping hand of their parents, both as regards the knowledge convenient for them and in definite training, lest the rough and rude winds of life catch the tiny sails hoisted and submerge the delicate craft with its little captain.

In the pamphlet 'Children are born Persons'<sup>5</sup> come further considerations of the child's estate, and Miss Mason discusses the various forms of tyranny which militate against the freedom that is due to children.

In *School Education*<sup>6</sup> Miss Mason deals with 'Masterly Inactivity' (Chapter III) and the necessary qualities it calls forth on the part of parents; like peace it is not absence of action but has constructive and abiding power. It waits upon the knowledge, the self-revealing knowledge of a child, bearing in mind the old saying (marginal reading) 'Train up a child in *his* way' (his nature and his gifts), 'and when he is old he will not depart from it.'

This and much other knowledge the waiting parents may ponder until they come to the happy if anxious time when they are face to face with their own child, when Baby's own point of view must be considered. The supply of nourishment, food and love, is not enough without thought that ponders upon the fact, for example, that Tommy, under one, is so entirely different from what Mary was at the same age; that Mary at twelve months was in some respects in advance and in others behind Tommy; that each child from the first is like his father, or his mother, or one of his forbears, in this or that physical feature, and, later, in his ways. Here is the parents' opportunity to cultivate with love and patience the habits which both Tom and Mary need, and upon which they may achieve character. There are, too, traits of character which must be brought into practice, and tendencies (of which the parents are often only too conscious as their

<sup>5</sup> (P.N.E.U. Office, 6d.)

<sup>6</sup> *School Education*. (P.N.E.U. Office, 5/-.)



own failings) which must be starved out. Mary, who screams at two until she gets her own way, may become an unpleasantly managing woman; Tommy, who sulks and is silent, a morbid, self-pitying man; Tim, at three, always wants to see the wheels go round, and prefers some such occupation to his food, for which he never seems hungry; while John, at two, is always hungry for his meals, likes making a noise, splashing in water, for example, when Tim would rather throw stones and watch what happens. 'He has such a strong will' is often a description of what is really obstinacy, that is, the paralysing of the will by the obsession of one idea, when Tom cannot make himself do what he ought.

But the small boy who from an early age can hammer a piece of wood, or help in the garden beside his father, and the small girl who can 'help' mother in the house, and both Tom and Mary who can look forward to an evening hour of stories and games, are saved from many handicaps which come to children who are sometimes homeless in their homes.

Again, wise parents realise that they must be on the watch lest they should encroach upon the respect due to children by constant admonition, undue praise, unwanted suggestions as to how to do things which the children have already learned to do quite well; by making the most of every opportunity for moral suggestions on the example set, for instance, by other 'good' children; by suggestions that the child should appreciate or pity when his experience is not yet ready for it. Happily brought up children learn gradually from the parents' own attitudes of sympathy, love, kindness, but such lessons must be unconsciously learned; they are part of the natural and proper atmosphere in which a child should live.

'Change his thoughts,' we say, with regard to a baby who is 'being tiresome,' and there are always possibilities for presenting a fresh idea. When a child needs his thoughts changed, he may, for example, be taken out of a self-pitying frame of mind by the thought of the needs of children who are less well off than himself; and, as his small world enlarges, he is taught of the great and good deeds of noble men and women. An older child should be trained to change his own thoughts and regain his will power thereby. But long before this is possible, children will show signs of dispositions of mind which it may tax mother or father to the utmost to deal with—signs of jealousy, resentment, domination, cruelty for which apparently there is no cause, but which the mother must watch and guard against and even nurse her child against, as she

would nurse him through an attack of measles. Parents who have helped to form habits of mind or of body in their children have the comfort of knowing that such habits have the assistance of bodily, if invisible, nerve structure. So too parents who provide knowledge for the mind have the assurance that they are putting their children in possession of that 'expulsive power of a new affection' which does such wonderful rescue work in time of temptation.

Every father and mother can tell of the amazing powers of young children in perceiving, apprehending and making use of knowledge.

Rosanna (aged eighteen months) was out in her 'pram' one September and was offered a bit of Dutch clover to smell. She did so and then with a beaming smile blew upon it, evidently remembering that in the previous March she had been shown how to blow a head of dandelion seeds.

Tommy (aged six) is very strict with the teller of stories, who is not allowed to omit or alter anything in the version of the story as first heard.

Dick (aged six) sometimes offers his own solution to a question. 'How could God make the world in six days, Mummy?' And 'Mummy' perplexed and wise, says she must think about it. Dick, later, 'I know, a thousand years with God is as one day, and one day as a thousand years.'

John (aged eight) had been told that in this world it was not possible for everyone to have the same as everyone else, and after much pondering he said: "Yes, I see that justice is not always equality."

So education does not start without much to go upon; the child is a person, a whole person with all the powers latent that he ever will have. Therefore education must advance altogether if it advance at all. One-sided development will leave other sides maimed. 'Wisdom is justified of *all* her children' and varied knowledge in many directions is as necessary for the growth of the mind as varied food for the body.

And it was with this far-reaching vision of education that Miss Mason drew up the short synopsis of her philosophy and dealt with it in detail—a chapter to each clause—in her *Essay towards a Philosophy of Education*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education*. (P.N.E.U. Office, 7/6).



## II.

*'In this time of extraordinary pressure, educational and social, perhaps a mother's first duty to her children is to secure for them a quiet growing time, a full six years of passive receptive life, the waking part of it for the most part out in the fresh air.'*<sup>8</sup>

We constantly receive letters from mothers who would like their children aged between four and five to join the Parents' Union School, and we need to remind ourselves that children deprived of a quiet growing time suffer later when 'lessons' should begin, showing signs of a lack of vitality or a want of concentration, 'so unlike what R. used to be.' These signs are an indication that R. has been living at too great a speed. Again, we are told that B. at 4½ is quite able to do as much as J. at six, that he is indeed quicker in some ways. There is no doubt about it; B. has 'lived up to' J. in everything. J. has not had anyone but his mother or nurse—a very different matter! But B. must still have his quiet growing time, especially as in any case he works harder up to the age of six than he will at any other period of his life. He should still enjoy the nursery freedom; he should still have 'occupations' but not lessons.

A child should enter the P.U.S. at six ready for the serious work of 'lessons.' His early years should have prepared him as regards the discipline of habit and the joy of life out of doors; he should also have learned that knowledge is desirable and he should understand something of what it means to say 'Our Father.'

Home discipline is attained in the formation of habits. There should be no so-called 'lessons' in the nursery. 'Occupations' is the word Miss Mason used, and for these no time-table should be set and there should be a sense of much freedom both in the manner and matter of 'What shall we do next?' Again, just as the best-loved toys are the simplest in construction because they give full scope to a child's imagination, so all material used should be of the simplest kind. 'Apparatus' should be avoided. A children's 'special hour' should be a time of happy occupation and should be arranged at a time when children cannot be out of doors. Stories, pictures, materials of all kinds are necessary because the provision must be no less liberal of its kind than that for an older child.

It is possible that parents and teachers may welcome a few suggestions as to suitable books and things for the nursery and playroom, though in these days the supply is usually abundant

<sup>8</sup> *Home Education*, p. 43.

and easily obtained. The suggestions offered in the *Nursery and Playroom Leaflet*<sup>9</sup> cover a wide field and may be varied in many ways. Classification according to age is little indicated, as so much depends upon the individual child. Cheaper books and materials may be had, but little children should have large, well illustrated books and make models with good material, and in the case of clay, they should make large models.

Books are also suggested which give help in modern methods of dealing with the physical care of children—clothes, food, ailments, accidents, preventive measures, as indicated in the list. From these books, too, may be secured wise advice upon the handicaps from which some children suffer, such as speech and sight defects, clumsiness, over-sensitiveness, and other nervous handicaps, which are not always recognised at first for what they are.

When the idea of P.N.E.U. Playrooms was started some ten years ago the name was chosen of set purpose. Nursery schools and classes have been carried on for many years with much success in poor neighbourhoods, but it was felt that in a Playroom attached to a P.N.E.U. school it was very important to omit the word 'school' or 'class,' and in this way to divest it entirely of any idea of school work, class work, time-tables, examinations, organised games and the many things that are useful and necessary in dealing with a number of children of school age. There should be no uniform, badges or 'colours.' These are part of the promotion when 'Tom' is old enough to go to school and the dignity of it should not be forestalled! It is important to go back to what *we* did 'at home,' either in the nursery under the direction of a good nannie, co-operating with mother, or in a home where the mother undertakes the whole of the up-bringing of the children herself, with the father's help. Playrooms should make up to children for what so many of them miss now,—that is, the give and take of family life; for children in close daily contact do far more for each other than is possible for an only child to receive at the hands of the most devoted parents. In considering therefore, what is necessary for a playroom we must bear in mind the outfit, happiness and discipline, and the general provision made in a good nursery.

The children must have toys, not too many, but those which leave plenty of scope for imagination. They must have games, for the most part invented by themselves with their own toys, or without. They must have things to do with the simplest materials,

<sup>9</sup> Free to members of the P.N.E.U.



easily found in any home. They must have plenty of good stories, songs, nursery rhymes, pictures of all kinds. There must be a sense of freedom, secured by the deputed authority and the discipline exercised by those in charge, so that the children give and take what is *due* to each other. Children who have fallen into bad habits, who are self-centred and show want of thought and consideration for other children must be trained to contribute their share to the happiness, goodwill, gaiety and thoughtfulness which go to make a happy Playroom. These qualities soon become a tradition where those in authority understand something of the quality of a child, his reasonableness, his special powers, his special temptations, his knowledge, his qualities and his defects.

A love of children is the chief qualification for those in charge of a Playroom, and the first condition is that every child must be treated individually. There is the shy child who needs encouragement, and who may be allowed at first just to look on. One little boy I know often lay under a form when anything fresh happened, until he had got used to his new surroundings, and then he accepted the teacher's hand and joined in a game, and the ice was broken. There is the self-assertive child who is inclined to wish for an audience; but in his case the children will probably take him in hand themselves and show that if he wants to join in their games he must do as they do. There is the child to whom everything new brings a kind of panic, and who needs constant re-assurance that what she is asked to do she can manage easily. There is the child who cannot eat vegetables, who dislikes milk pudding, who even finds it difficult to eat anything at all, but who very quickly learns to do as all the other children do provided that too much notice is not taken. About many other matters too the path of wisdom lies in not taking too much notice. Some children will do anything to attract attention. There is the vindictive child, who has probably come from a home where she has been starved of the love due to her, and who must be prevented from carrying out any kind of bullying or terrorising. There is the nervous child with tricks, who may be teased if a careful watch is not kept. There is the child with a lisp or stammer, of whom her mother says, 'Oh, she will grow out of it as she grows older'; but children do not grow out of these things unless the cause is traced and they are shown the right way to overcome the handicaps. But in every Playroom there are a number of healthy and normal children, upon whose help the teacher can rely in welcoming newcomers and making things easier for the children to whom life is difficult.

All these matters are of the first importance in a Playroom, for handicapped children should be freed from the domination of these handicaps before they are too well established or the children will suffer at school on account of them, later on.

As to the actual conduct of a day in the Playroom, I have some notes sent to me by a lover of children, who has had much experience in her own Playroom. All the suggested arrangements should be kept as elastic as possible. The children come from nine to twelve, and from nine to nine-thirty they are free to play with each other and do anything that takes their fancy. It should be play *with* each other, because this is the time when so much may be done to give children an opportunity of carrying out fair play. Someone should, of course, be in the room, but she should never interfere unless the play becomes rough or destructive or too noisy, or some child is being unfairly treated. The children make ships and trains, etc., with the forms and chairs. They chase each other, have tugs of war, swing each other round, get used to each other in many ways, laughing and talking and singing. The condition is that when the bell rings at 9.25 the children know that playtime is nearly over, and immediately everything must be put straight for the morning's occupations.

These begin with a very simple hymn, which some of the children will sing, and the new ones will learn gradually. Then there is a short very simple prayer. Then comes a Bible story, told reverently (much depends upon the attitude of the teacher) with a picture sometimes, and then sometimes a piece of poetry is learned, or a hymn. The children choose the verses which they would like to learn. Sometimes a fable is acted. It must always be remembered that some of the children are four and some five, so that in the next period, while those of four have playthings from the cupboard, those of five may be picking out letters, or making figures or letters on the board, or using their coloured counters. During the next period the children may take journeys on a magic carpet (a large picture is used) or have another story told, again with a large picture, about animals, or a history story, again with a picture.

At 10.30 comes half an hour for lunch and more play. Some children will bring lunch with them, some will have biscuits at the parents' request, but most of the children will be glad of a little mug of water. The little coloured cups sold at Woolworth's are very useful for this, as they are very various in colour, and each child can have her own. The play of course should be out of doors when possible.



Then should follow two periods of 15 minutes each of various occupations. There may be a percussion band, for which the children sit on the floor, and beat time with their instruments to the piano accompaniment, changing the instruments so that each gets a turn. Part of the time they march or run to music. Sometimes one child beats time for the rest of the band. This probably will include all the children, as will making something in clay, or learning a few words of French with a picture or in a game, or listening to another tale, again with a picture; or two or three children who find it very difficult to sing a correct note will have a little help in ear training, while the others are writing or making piles of numbers with counters. Then comes a last period of singing games, or physical exercises, or painting, or handwork, or sand trays. All these occupations should be varied each day. A quarter of an hour is enough for most of them, but the percussion band, singing games, painting or handwork should be allowed a longer period. But in all these, the teacher must be on her guard. Some children will show signs of fatigue, and she must know when it would be wise to change the occupation or when a little encouragement is the wiser course.

The children should be encouraged to talk and ask questions, but they must be trained to do this in orderly fashion, and no narration should be expected. The children will volunteer their own small experience about the matters that are brought up, will bring things from home, will repeat what they have heard Daddy or Mummy say about the events of the day, and indeed provide a large part of the carrying on. But care is necessary. The children must be free to talk, but they must be trained not to interrupt each other or the teacher, to talk quietly, to ask questions one at a time. Again, when they are sitting at any special occupation, many children have to *learn* to sit still and to work quietly. Here the tradition of the playroom will help a great deal, because children like to do as other children do. If the weather is good, there should be a running game out of doors in addition to the usual half-hour. In summer-time much of all this can be done out of doors, games, jumping, ball games and even stories when the children sit on rugs or little chairs while listening.

There is also much to be done in the cloak-room in the way of training the children in dressing themselves, keeping their shoes in the right pigeon-hole and being brisk both here and in the Playroom in putting things away in orderly fashion.

It must be borne in mind that the children need a quiet

atmosphere, without fuss or worry. They will supply all the spirit and noise necessary, perhaps sometimes too much of the latter! But the teacher must be prepared to learn from the children and by training herself and getting the necessary advice, to act quickly but never hastily. It is important that she should learn to see the children's point of view and also to realise that children need the help and support of wise authority. No-one should undertake the charge of a P.N.E.U. Playroom who has not made a careful study of 'Home Education' and 'Parents and Children,' and the chapter on 'Masterly Inactivity' in School Education, testing herself by the self-study questions at the end of each volume. These questions take up the essential points in the method set forth. She should also secure the advice of a teacher who has learned to understand children, so that she may be able to help, for instance, the child with a vivid imagination, who will romance about what she has seen or heard, because her mind has not been given sufficient material upon which her imagination can work; with the child who suffers and won't tell; with the child who 'tells tales'; with the child who 'stays put,' whether physically or mentally. Such matters are sure to come up. But the joy of working with and learning from the children, and the love and trust which any child shows to those who understand or try to understand her, and the increase in the nervous stability of highly strung children will repay a hundredfold the thought and care which the Playroom teacher can give to any children committed to her charge.

### III.

#### *Breadth and Balance in Education and the Parents' Union School.*

In continuing the education of boys and girls after the first six years of preparation, Miss Mason provided the work of the Parents' Union School, dealing with the education of children and young people up to the age of eighteen. Children who have learned to work independently use their various powers freely upon the assimilation of knowledge, but as the claims of schooling become more and more exigent and more complicated, the need of continued definite training as well as schooling becomes more urgent, lest the early promise should lose its bloom. To this end, Miss Mason wrote *Ourselves*,<sup>10</sup> a book which can be put

<sup>10</sup> *Ourselves* (P.N.E.U. Office, 7/6).



into the hands of boys and girls; but long before this, it is of use to parents in showing how a child may be prepared gradually to 'weigh his own estate' and to learn the management of it. The two parts of *Ourselves* deal with self-direction and self-knowledge, and young people are shewn the 'Way of the Will' and the 'Way of the Reason.'

'I do not think the Israelites learned anything, because they took too much for granted,' wrote a little girl of ten. She had been narrating the story of the giving of the manna, and was asked what lessons the Israelites probably learned from it.

How easy it is to take things for granted, to assume that what has happened will be repeated and that what has gone on for years is the best that can be done in the circumstances; to avoid the trouble of considering the 'whence' or 'whither'; to forget that 'manna' left over loses its power and that it must be gathered fresh every day! It does not mean that because our particular 'manna' has lost its power a substitute must be found, but it does mean that 'manna' must not be taken for granted, that there must be a daily renewed effort to gather it, if it is to have vitalising power. It is a parable for all conditions of life that only manna gathered by effort can renew life, whether it be physical, moral, intellectual or spiritual. But the effort must be directed towards a reality, not to substitutes or side-issues.

We substitute our own ideas of manna. We take for granted, perhaps, that it is merely the edible moss which in times of war-famine has been used to feed the troops; we name it glibly, and say that it can still be found; but 'the gift without the giver is bare,' and the fact is a poor substitute for the sacrament in a parable, with its divine relationships. All that is implied in 'A child is a person' is coming to its own slowly, and we are beginning to realise that education is one as a child is one, and that we must start at foundations, at roots, at the beginning, and must have an end in view; but it must be a vision and not an immediate commodity, for the fruits of the Spirit are of almost invisible growth from an invisible spring. Instead of considering 'for of such is the Kingdom,' we set a child in the midst and put forth *our* ideas of the way he should grow, and then many side issues scramble for a place, because we have lost our vision. We talk about Universal Brotherhood, and we cry for peace as if it were merely absence of war. We talk about Citizenship, and a book has recently been issued to show how

citizenship can be introduced into every subject in the curriculum. We over-stress the social and economic aspects of History, and the physical and political aspects of Geography, and behold! the wonder of the revelation in man and in nature is no more. The Board of Education in a recent volume has given us a word of wisdom in asking that the emphasis in educational practice shall now be transferred from the subject to the child. It is well to remember also that the effort called forth in a child is sometimes resistance, not to ideas which touch his relationships, however profound they may be—these find a ready response in his mind—but to side issues which are really stones for bread, because they are utilitarian in origin.

Do we lack the seeing eye, the hearing ear, the understanding mind, which might result if we pondered upon the 'manna' which is divinely sent into the world whenever a little child is born? If we have these qualities, we may get a glimpse into his mind, some knowledge of his possibilities, his powers, his tendencies, bad and good, and we may be worthy to help him to fullness of life instead of 'hindering,' 'offending,' 'despising' him, even unconsciously, in our want of thought.

There never was a time when children and their needs were so much considered, their education, their training for the future, their food, their clothes, their surroundings. Beautiful nursery schools care for them from babyhood, private schools and preparatory schools are housed often in beautiful country houses, thousands are spent upon finely-equipped State schools. Teachers are highly qualified, often trained as well in the most efficient methods. The Board of Education issues, one after another, reports which are full of wise counsel, teachers' conferences protest against various forms of academic tyranny. The Heads of many schools seek the co-operation of parents, and various societies gather parents and teachers together in conference. What more can be done? Surely all this makes for progress in all directions! Perhaps it does, and gratitude is due to those who concern themselves in these matters, but does it sometimes happen that the manna itself is lost sight of in the discussions about it?

We contribute towards 'old age' which is now pensioned, to unemployment which is doled, to sickness against which we 'insure.' We pay rates for state education, school fees for the special education we choose for our children. We attend conferences, discuss problems, do our duty more or less in our 'state of life.' Surely we have contributed our quota and may we not



therefore take it for granted that all is well? Even the stress of life for many of us bids us answer 'yes.'

But in gathering 'manna,' there are lessons to be learned. Do we watch the slowly-moving processes of 'here a little, there a little' by which God is revealing Himself in ways not obvious to those who take too much for granted? We still accept second-hand opinions, and leave issues to those 'more qualified to judge than we are.' It is easy to see the dangers of totalitarian states and dictators, but not so easy to recognise the number of smaller totalitarian states in which we bow the knee. In matters educational we cannot take for granted that schooling is entirely safe in the hands of specialists. Their work, for the most part is carried on again in a number of totalitarian states having little in common with each other, whether it be in the stages of a child's schooling, or in the lessons in which he is to be instructed. For instance, some years ago a line was drawn at eleven plus, a psychological break, so it was said, in a child's educational course. Immediately it was concluded that school books, for the most part, were written on wrong lines, and that it was necessary to have books graded in print, language, ideas, year by year as a child proceeded psychologically. Already a protest has been made, and two well-known authorities have said that they believe that this division is an economic rather than a psychological one. But the mischief was done, the output of books on such lines is not easily stemmed, and a generation of children may pass out of the schools less well equipped for life than they might have been. Our great-grandmothers learned history from great biographies, geography from books of travel; they read 'literature' without notes or criticism; and they knew what they were talking about to the end of their days, for they lived in a *state* of knowledge as regards those subjects. There were no books about books in those days, and readers had leisure to assimilate what they read, even if it was in a limited circle.

To-day the history teacher has taken a degree in history, and with a world of information at her disposal, and centuries of newly-discovered history to cope with, and the new demands made by social and economic aspects, she is compelled to shut herself up to the aspect of her subject that is needed for examination purposes and to collect and to sort and to compress as she can for her pupils. The geography teacher, the science teacher, the mathematics teachers, are in much the same position. The teachers of literature and citizenship again plough lonely furrows,

and the flowers which should be making gay the pastures of history are shown, so to speak, in book 'film reels,' labelled, for example, 'the Dramatists of the Sixteenth Century,' 'The Poets of the Nineteenth,' 'Short Lives of the Great Biologists,' or 'Stories from Great Novels,' 'Scenes from Great Dramatists'; while the aids to the reading and writing of English remind one of the centipede who lay distracted in a ditch forgetting how to run!

But there are voices crying in the wilderness for better things. Many die away for want of someone to listen among those who do not take too much for granted; more than this, they need some rallying standard by which they may value their own position. In spite of all the signs of progress in recent years, we seem to drift further away from a unifying idea which should direct the 'whence' and 'whither' of our educational efforts. Attempts at securing some kind of unity are continually frustrated by some short-sighted utilitarian issue.

What if there were unities, not of time, place and action, as in a play, but of realities which could govern and direct our devious ways towards education for life, not for a living? Our outlook to-day is too much on the lines of—the school is the unit of the nation, the teacher is the unit of the school, the subject is the unit for the teacher; and all for the benefit of the child, who *must be saved* from the disadvantages of his home, from unqualified teaching, and for the subject which is to bring him his livelihood! This is a severe statement, too severe perhaps to be true of any actual schooling, but it indicates an outlook which causes many of the charges that are brought against it at a time when schools are almost without exception happy places, and where the children are cared for by devoted teachers.

Here are one or two charges:—

(a) John (7) learns as well as the usual subjects, Algebra and Geometry, Latin and French. The British History set for a term was from the Landing of the Romans to the abdication of Edward VIII, and on this an examination paper of 14 questions was set.

(b) Tom (9) gives three hours a day to Latin, and on one occasion six chapters of History were set for his evening preparation.

(c) Mary (8) was given 15 long division sums for homework.

The usual reason given for homework is that children must have some independent work to do, but the Commission that sat upon this subject reported that homework was usually given with a view to extra work for public examination requirements.



The children's joy in many schools is concerned with games and companionship. Joy in lessons is not even considered 'good form'!

There are a set of 'Unities,' *born*, not *made*, which might govern and direct our thoughts and actions in staging the play for the education of every man. The *family* is the unit of the nation, the *child* is the unit for education, the *mind* is the unit to which each subject in the curriculum should contribute its quota towards that *state* of knowledge in which a child should live. Of these three unities, the family has receded into the background; the child has become the centre of organised attention, not for his natural possibilities but with a view to fitting his mind into the various cogs of the educational machine. These three unities Miss Mason took as a foundation of the Method which she finely wrought after twenty-five years' experience of children and young people (at home and in schools of various kinds as well as in a training college), before she started her work at Ambleside—a Method which has been in use for over fifty years since. She did not take it for granted that everyone would ponder upon the 'manna' divinely sent into the world, and so she put first of all the precious possessions attendant upon family life, the attributes of a person and the living 'organism' of mind, all of which must be considered in guiding a child into fullness of life.

When Miss Mason devised the Parents' Union School in 1891, one of her aims was to raise the standard of home education, and introduce some of the advantages of school education. It would seem now as if the tables were turned, and as if the present need in educational thought were to go back to these Unities to ponder, instead of taking for granted, the natural atmosphere for a child, who is endowed with great possibilities for good and for ill, and who possesses a mind with all its powers ready for action. What of the family, the cradle of the child, the nursery for his natural preparation for the joys and the discipline of life? Who but his parents should give him his first knowledge of life, his gradually increasing acquaintance with the fruits of the Spirit, and the ideas which shall initiate the habits of the good life? Who will teach the growing boy the nature of self-control and self-knowledge which shall make him a responsible person, able in his turn to act with the same deputed authority which his parents exercised—an authority that comes of knowledge and not from hearsay?

It rests with those who stand *in loco parentis*, including all teachers, to take a parent's view, a family view of education, a

broad view of the nature and possibilities of every child, and a long view of his education, to see to it that he has plenty of knowledge, that his mind may grow, and of opportunity, that he may duly exercise his powers, both of mind and of body, so that he may enter into that state of knowledge which brings in its train humility, joy, and the power of growth.

On the stage of these three unities the drama of life must be played by each living soul, and here is a standard which should rally and test our efforts in the way of true education. 'I could never have carried on my school so happily, nor helped my children's parents in their difficulties, if it had not been for my knowledge of children, gained first in private teaching,' said a wise Headmistress. It is in the home schoolroom above all that the teacher has the opportunity of learning to know children all round, for she works with a group of children of different ages, with varying needs in the way of training, and varying approach to knowledge. In a class, the teacher can only have a group which more or less approximates in age, and to a certain extent in attainments. She is concerned chiefly with class management, and with the one or two subjects which she does not have to leave in the hands of specialists. She has to learn as much as she can of her children from a limited point of view, and in the press of work can only visualise a child's needs in a limited area. It is true that teachers in boarding schools have wider scope than this, but in these schools there are also age and Form limitations. The specialist teacher considers her children chiefly from the point of view of one or perhaps two subjects in which she has much to give them, and she is tempted to deal with her subject without much regard to the many other subjects which must also struggle for a living. There are few Heads of schools who are not distracted by this struggle, and unless the Head has some wise and convincing views upon the curriculum as a whole, the children will also be involved in the struggle. Children are handicapped in trying to fulfil the demands made first by the preparatory school, then in the preparatory school for the public school, and then again for the university, even for the ordinary course, while the struggle is intensified by the additional efforts required for places and scholarships.

What if it were possible to bring the curriculum back to this test of the real unities, instead of limiting it to a standard to which only six per cent. of all the children in the British Isles attain, that is, for university preparation? Here we are up against another series of totalitarian states, for the preparatory school



takes cognisance only of boys of a certain class and a certain age range, the public schools of a certain class and another age range, the university of a now varying social class and another age range; the only point of contact being a certain amount of academic requirements. The State schools have the children of a much wider range of age, and they deal with another class of the community.

Each of these States is self-contained and offers no long vision of education as a whole. The home schoolroom does offer this wide vision. The teacher of history is also the teacher of literature, geography and citizenship, even if she gets outside help in some subjects. Moreover, she is intimately concerned with the whole up-bringing of the children. It is a distinct loss that the word 'teacher' is now so limited in meaning. We need some word with a broader meaning, equivalent to the Greek *paidagogos*, which included leading, guiding, training, teaching. Ascham's use of 'scholemaster' had a broader meaning, with a vision of one concerned with education, and not merely schooling. The educator is one who nourishes, feeds, and trains those in his charge. What considerations therefore must be pondered by teachers and all *in loco parentis*? They fall under the various headings, of (1) the provision of a natural, not artificial, atmosphere, in which (2) the habits of the good life may be initiated and fostered, and in which again (3) natural, not artificial, opportunity is given for the full scope of a child's natural powers—and of these how little some of us know! For the exercise of these powers a child requires knowledge and experience, knowledge in due abundance and variety, not limited by the personal views of his parents, knowledge in three kinds, which will meet his due relationships, that is to the world around him, to man, and to God.

Again, a child may not be deprived of any of his natural relationships for any cause whatsoever. The argument of a personal bias against religion in the teacher places a heavy burden on a child, who will set out on a lonely journey by himself, unchartered, without rudder or compass. The argument that his teacher knows nothing of the natural world outside the textbook and the laboratory should be a disqualification, but this is one of the things that is taken for granted as inevitable. The argument that none of the family are musical is no excuse in these days of wireless and gramophones. The argument that his teacher 'left off' geography, or history, or science at school at, say, twelve, in order to specialise for a School Certificate or other examination—such gaps are again

taken for granted as inevitable. Education cannot be carried out in the one or two subjects the teacher has specialised in; and, until we distinguish between education and scholarship, the distinction of scholars will be bought at the heavy price of the prostitution of education for the many. We are amused at the pretensions of the 'Failed B.A.' advertisements in India. But Education buries her face in shame at our want of understanding, in taking for granted that any kind of Western High School education is suitable under any circumstances for peoples of an older culture, of different race and education and habitat, and with so entirely different an outlook that they can only merge their individuality and become mere imitators.

A novel, *Doctor, Here's Your Hat*, recently appeared from the pen of Dr. Jerger, who fears 'that the family doctor is doomed to disappear beneath the advancing waves of specialisation.' Indeed a small boy was recently left at school with the addresses of five specialists, one of whom was to be summoned at once at the slightest sign of trouble. We should like to say 'Teacher, Here's Your Post' to the man or woman of general qualifications, with some knowledge of human nature and a love and understanding of children, one who realises that all the relationships of life are a child's due. Such a teacher is nearer the real unities in general outlook. The specialist, of course, has his part to play when boys and girls reach the age of 16 or 17, and have secured some of that physical, mental, moral and spiritual stability which can stand the strain of special preparation for going out into the world. His boys loved 'Mr. Chips' for his humanity, not for his scholarship, which they took for granted as inevitable.

Finally we must narrow our considerations to the main object of this paper, which is a plea (a) for a long view of education, and (b) a wide view, and (c) for certain, not generally recognised, principles both of theory and of practice. Since Miss Mason passed away much of her practice has been generally recognised as having certain educational value, no longer to be classed as 'extras.' Nature Study (out of doors), Nature Note Books, Handicrafts, Music Appreciation, Picture Study, the *reading* (not scholastic study) of Shakespeare's Plays, European and General History, Century Books, found a place on her P.U.S. programmes fifty years ago, long before they were given a place in the curricula of schools (other than P.N.E.U.). Even then the approach to these subjects was somewhat different because the practice springs from the not generally recognised principles to which I have referred. Miss



Mason took as the data, or the axioms, or 'the manna,' of her Method, as you will, the family and its life, the child and his possibilities, and the nature and the working of mind.

The doctrine is still prevalent that mind must be trained, and, even if a wider curriculum is advocated, it is that mind may be trained in more directions. Miss Mason held that mind is, so to speak, a spiritual organism which must be fed, not in order that it may *know* but that it may *grow*, and in growing use all its powers. The brain is the physical organ which registers invisible impressions and which assists the mind in confirming habits of thought and of conduct. Mind being spiritual feeds upon ideas presented in fitting guise; it is not stirred into action by questioning from without, for 'the mind can know nothing but what it can answer to a question put by the mind to itself.' A small boy, writing an unusually long letter to his father in Africa, was heard to say to himself each time he had written a paragraph, 'what next?' and then 'what next' followed till he had written quite a long description of a happy day. Children (and adults) accustomed to narration upon sufficient and suitable material after *one supreme act of attention* work in this way. It must be remembered that *mind* work and *memory* work are two different things. Mind work is assimilated and not forgotten. Memory work is necessary for tables, formulae, rules, grammatical terms, but these things are not easily assimilated and therefore need frequent revision. Livingstone went a long trek to measure one of Africa's great rivers, but, when he got there, found he had forgotten the trigonometrical ratio by which he intended to work out its width. In learning poetry by heart the ideas are assimilated by the mind and the memory of the words is helped thereby.

But mind does not function under the taking down or learning up of notes, *questioning*, or any effort to *remember* what has been heard or read. It responds to an idea and reproduces according to its kind, and it is possible to see from a child's face and manner whether he is putting forth mind work or trying to remember. Questions are admissible occasionally, but they must contain an idea that sets the mind at work and does not merely ask for information. Children enjoy examinations set to find out what they know, and giving them scope for a page or more on each answer. An examination paper in which not less than fifteen questions are set in each subject and in which the answers require less than half a dozen words (such papers are not uncommon) only sets the memory to work.

It is not too much to say that upon this aspect of mind depends the whole of a child's curriculum and the value, or not, of the teacher's work. It acts as a dividing line between profitable and unprofitable work. Where mind and its powers and due relationships are recognised, the spirit is touched to fine issues, and education becomes a unity depending upon every bodily and spiritual activity. But where the dominant factor is narrowed to special technical language and to training for some utilitarian purpose, there are at once set in motion the wheels of a machine which must have supplies of specially prepared fuel, a sufficient stock for combustion which will, it is hoped, send the machine along to a definite station.

And the provision for children may be food or fuel, sustenance or stimulant. For food there is knowledge set forth with a melody of words and harmony of thought, or with the beautiful precision of the wonder of science, which is the outcome of the *state* of knowledge in which the writer lives—knowledge gained from much pondering upon the subject in hand and drawn from wide relationships in other fields of knowledge. Such knowledge knows no nonage but the mind, and appeals alike to young and old.

For fuel we have well-selected, compiled, assorted, compressed information which depends for its attraction upon 'the look of its print, paper, illustrations, etc.' 'Fuel' is easy to deal with, for it is taken in tabloid form; little mental effort is required, for 'all that is necessary to be taken is given.' And the charge brought against this is, 'he hates lessons, and says he will never open another book when he leaves school.'

The sustenance of ideas means work, *i.e.* assimilation, and, like food for the body, it must be plentiful and include variety and 'roughage' if mastication and digestion are to be attracted to work. And each individual must work upon this for himself. According to his ability he will secure one idea here, another there, from the provision, some more, some less, but always each according to his powers, and then follows growth—growth that brings light into the eyes of both the child and his teacher.

A P.N.E.U. member said one day, 'We always seem to consider the abnormal and difficult children in our Conference discussions. It is rather a relief to get home to a family of normal children.' Perhaps we are apt to forget any public expression of thanks for the hundreds of normal, happy and healthy homes where the parents are well and wisely educating their children, and where the children are growing up for the most part unnoticed, because



they are neither unduly naughty nor physically or mentally handicapped. But though in the P.U.S. we are fortunate in having the co-operation of hundreds of such parents, and also of teachers, who think and care about education, *we do not lose sight of the children who are handicapped*. In all the P.U.S. papers that are sent out from Ambleside, as well as in the many letters that are written, we bear in mind that education *in the family by the family* is the most important part of a child's preparation for life, and we take careful stock of the assets that we have at our disposal, as well as a long vision of the time of preparation. I use the term 'family' because the family ideal is the most comprehensive one and my colleagues and I have daily reminders through the post and in our visitors, of that big invisible family of the P.U.S., a family made up of many families, of parents and children and teachers in Playrooms, Schoolrooms and Schools, of all sorts and conditions in all parts of the world.

## IV.

*A definite Chart and Compass: Principles and Means to an End.*

In carrying out the P.U.S. work the ever-varying changes in modern life, the stress laid now on this aspect of education and now on that, would make any sort of progressive work in the P.U.S. impossible if we had not a definite chart and compass, and in Miss Mason's teaching we are reminded first of all that there is the asset of the family, and next the asset of every child. Happily there is always a 'Jennifer' of 2½, for example, with us. She is a perennial source of joy and inspiration, with her dancing feet, her all-embracing smiles, her knowledge of how to manage Daddy, sometimes even Mummy, her wisdom in accepting the inevitable, her intuition as to what is going on, her powers of love, of choice, of decision, her generous, considerate ways, her strong rebukes to the hasty and her own sad lapses, when 'everything seems to go wrong.' Tom follows, perhaps somewhat behind in his rather slower appreciation of life, but with his powers no less sure, varied, and all-embracing. What will Tom and Jennifer be at 18? How best can their inheritance be preserved? How best may they be guided to self-knowledge and self-control? How best may the parents lay before them the knowledge that shall meet their growing needs and help to give them the experience which they

lack? Both Jennifer and Tom have their special joys of helping Mummy and Daddy, and there is no parent who does not hope that both may find a lifelong joy in being of service to their generation. Alas, to think that they might reach the age of eighteen or nineteen to say, with the despairing young man in *Punch*, 'All very fine for you, Dad; you just try living in 1939!'

Some of you will recall the old picture in *Punch* where Eric, aged four, says, 'Come here, Dora, I wants you,' and Dora, aged three, replies, 'Thank you, Eric, but I wants myself,' but unless we make full provision both for Dora and for Eric, we may find them at eighteen both stranded like the young man in *Punch*. And so we are bound to keep before us the ideals of family life and its needs, complicated as they are in these days by the additional handicaps an only child has to meet, and the difficulties of parents on whom the stress of modern life falls heavily.

Unfortunately also, *we live in these days under the domination of a number of half-truths*. There is the old 'diehard' psychology of the training of the mind, and there are the utilitarian aspects of the subjects in the curriculum, either as a royal road to the abstract virtue most in demand, or as a means of livelihood. Again we use the old tag, 'mens sana in corpore sano,' as a plea for putting health first, whereas the poet Juvenal's prayer, written at a time of national decadence, was that the *mind* in a healthy body might be healthy. If we still quote 'Train up a child in the way he should go' we assume that it is *our* way for him, not *his* way (as the marginal reading gives), the way for which God has endowed him.

But the children help us—Tom has no patience with fairy tales 'which are not true,' but delights in Richard Coeur-de-Lion. Mary cannot bear sad stories, and begs that she may tell another story instead. Anything alive receives a warm welcome from John, but, as 'Pet Marjorie' said, 'the most devilish thing is 8×8, and 7×7 is what nature itself cannot endure.' A map is Philip's delight, and a hammer and nails are dear to the heart of Bob.

There are difficulties to face—hide-bound traditions, blindness of heart, and fears for the future, which often hinder parents in that greatest of all adventures, the bringing up of the next generation. 'Bringing up' is the right word, and it is to consider education in this sense that we of the P.N.E.U. meet together to take counsel. How often it is taken to mean 'schooling' only! Then Tom enters upon *that vicious circle, which no one has the courage to break*, in intensive preparation first for his preparatory school, then for the Public School and then for the University.



Committees, Conferences, educational Reports, all acknowledge the attendant evils. Even a distinguished University Professor made a protest recently: 'On behalf of my fellow mediocrities I plead with you to remember the claims of the ninety and nine when preparing your one lone sinner for a senior scholarship!'

In the Parents' Union School the claim of the ninety and nine come first and the programmes deal with the provision of knowledge as a means of growth—physically, mentally, morally, spiritually—which, coming to young people under the direction of the teaching power of the Spirit of God, should carry them on towards their vocation in some form of useful and happy service.

The background of the detailed work in the programmes and examination papers is contained in the sections dealing with 'The Curriculum' in *Home Education*, *School Education* and *The Essay towards a Philosophy of Education*.

For those who desire a 'refresher' course in Miss Mason's teaching, this 'Essay' is suggested; she wrote it at nearly 80, at the end of sixty years of active experience with children and young people. The Index is so arranged that it forms a synopsis of the text under each important heading, such as mind, knowledge, character, will, etc., and each clause of the Short Synopsis of her philosophy is dealt with in a separate chapter. The volume is moreover a summary of the theory and the practice of her method and there are chapters dealing with the work in home schoolrooms, private schools and the schools of the State.

The word 'philosophy' has lost much of its meaning to-day, the modern conception of a philosopher being a specialist interested in certain branches of abstract thought. 'We must remember,' says Sir R. W. Livingstone, 'the literal meaning of the word, "love of wisdom," and envisage the sort of person whom Plato had in mind when he said that the philosopher was "a man ready and eager to taste every kind of knowledge, who addresses himself to its pursuit joyfully and with an insatiable appetite," and that "the mood of the philosopher is wonder; there is no other source of philosophy than this." There are no restrictions on the appetite of the "philosopher" for knowledge; science, history, metaphysics, every branch of study, fascinate him, excite his curiosity, awake his "wonder," and stir him to press on, by their means but beyond them, to something higher still than knowledge—wisdom.'<sup>11</sup>

Next in importance to the programmes come the children's

<sup>11</sup> *Portrait of Socrates*, Introduction, p. lii (Dent, 6/-).

examinations and the Examiners' reports. Our Examiners are University men of long experience in P.U.S. examinations; they are in close touch with modern social conditions, and are a great source of strength in maintaining the standard of work. They report upon each pupil's work in detail as well as a whole. It falls to me and to my colleagues to go through the work of many hundreds of children twice a year, in the light of the Examiners' reports, and to make notes for use in preparing the *always fresh* programmes and examination papers for the next term.

We have to ask ourselves the following:—

- (1) Have the questions set tested the powers of the children fairly and happily?
- (2) Has such and such a new book justified itself by the work done upon it?
- (3) What answers have called forth the Examiners' criticisms?
- (4) Did the cause lie in the question, or in the wrong use of the book by the teacher?
- (5) What help can be given to secure the right use?
- (6) What notes (in addition to those of the Examiner) must be sent by letter in cases where there is any special weakness or evident misunderstanding of both principles and methods on the part of the teacher in regard to the carrying out of the work and the training of the pupil? For the examinations must, according to our Regulations, 'afford moral training to the pupils, and should be conducted with absolute probity. Worry and excitement should be discouraged. Order, quiet and cheerfulness should be maintained.'

Furthermore, the examinations form a very close link with our members at home and overseas. The papers are often sent with letters asking for advice and help in the training of the children, as well as on a number of points which have appeared in working the examination. The parents' and teachers' reports on the term's work are also illuminating. And, again, the children help us.

Mary (7) is obviously working well and happily, for 'she begged to finish her examination in bed, though she had a cold.' Her answers are good and full of interest in her work, and she very candidly says, in describing a picture, 'some people think this picture beautiful, but I do not.' From Mary at 7 there is a long gap to another Mary at 17, who finds for herself in Dr. Bridges' *Testament of Beauty* answers to questions which have only dimly stirred in her mind till then.

There is no space here to go into the close connection between



the work of the P.U.S. and the Charlotte Mason Training College with its Practising School. Here there is a daily give and take which adds much to the vitality of the P.U.S.

In the twelve years at our disposal for work in continuous programmes, we are able to take a broad and a long view of the ground it is possible to cover. I hope to deal with this part of the work in a later paper. It is sufficient here to say that though we do not attempt to cover scholarship work of any kind we do consider the needs of the School Certificate in Form V. Of the work in Form VI a Headmistress writes:—

'I feel one of the joys of the Sixth Form is that there the girls can go on with the subjects they are most keenly interested in—subjects they have been longing to have time for—and freedom of choice is one of its characteristics.

They have *time* to read in detail, round a subject, or round a period, *time* to discuss and argue and find out—the fruiting period—growing from all the past 'taking in' of knowledge and narrating it. In the Sixth Form girls who have taken the School Certificate, and done well, learn how little they know—what fields of knowledge there are of which they know nothing, not even of their existence. Girls who failed in the School Certificate, or did not take it, find that the advanced work is absorbingly interesting and that they are not such 'duds' as they thought. It is a continual source of wonder to me to see how the girls 'grow' in the Sixth.

No girl ought ever to be allowed to leave school from the Fifth Form; she has spent a year on examination subjects studied in an examination manner, and must have training again in the reading of knowledge, in the spirit of friendliness and pleasure.'

The reading of essays done by these girls justifies all the Headmistress says.

The best P.U.S. work comes from home schoolrooms both at home and overseas (with the exception of schools where the work is carried out with understanding), partly because the provision of books is more certain, and also because individual children show more signs of growth upon a *whole* programme than upon parts of it. Again, the progress of individual children can be steadily watched. This also holds good to some extent in the cases where schools send up the papers of every pupil. In home schoolrooms children are entered in the Parents' Union School after a very full introduction in the preliminary questions, and the answers to these questions form a valuable adjunct in carrying on the work of the P.U.S., for they reveal much of the home life and up-bringing of each child, and indicate not only that there are hundreds of children being well

and happily brought up, but that there are also many children handicapped both as regards home life and home training.

The ever present and not easily answered question is, 'How far do many children get any real P.N.E.U. education?' The use of the books supplies a certain amount of 'schooling' but any programme offers much more than this, not in correlation (except in History and Literature) but in matters of current interest, and above all in the means of reading round a subject, slight in the lower forms, but increasing as the children progress into that *state* of knowledge to which they are called.

Children are sent into the world *themselves*, with all their powers, but they lack knowledge and experience. We may not 'hinder' or 'offend,' but into the experience of life we must train them, for they cannot be left either to drift uncharted and rudderless, or to the shock of rude awakenings. The knowledge to which they are *called* must not be bounded by our personal inclinations and sometimes limited ideas of the knowledge due to a child.

We hear occasionally of teachers and parents who think there must be something psychologically wrong with their children, and that they 'had better be taken to a doctor,' because they are inattentive, or nervous, or fidgetty, or unable to work alone, or need constant explanation, and knowledge *prepared* in various ways. In many cases no doctor is at all necessary, but only some understanding of what the children are and what they need.

'Mind alone is educable.' 'Knowledge is a *state* not a *store*.' 'Training belongs to the senses and muscles,' says Miss Mason. Indeed the nature of mind and its working is still hardly considered in the education of children. And in the very nature of the Family lies the secret for Tom and for Mary of a direct approach to God, to a knowledge of His works and to the understanding of man. In these three sorts of knowledge, of God, of man, and of the Universe, comes the truth that shall make them free